

VZCZCXRO3760  
RR RUEH DU RUEHJO  
DE RUEHSA #3720 2501338  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 071338Z SEP 06  
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5541  
INFO RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 3299  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 8091  
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 5187  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS PRETORIA 003720

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DEPT OF ENERGY FOR LPARKER

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA NUCLEAR STATUS: R&D AGREEMENTS AND  
SPENT FUEL TAKE BACK

REF: 05 PRETORIA 02923

11. (U) Sensitive but Unclassified; Protect Accordingly. Not  
for Internet Distribution.

12. (SBU) Incoming and outgoing Econ M/C's and Econoff met 31  
August with Tseliso Maqubela, Chief Director: Nuclear at the  
South African Department of Minerals and Energy (DME).  
Maqubela reported that the Research and Development  
Agreements on Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Material Safeguards  
Technologies are still under consideration by the South  
African Government (SAG) (reftel). Maqubela said there were  
no problems with the Nuclear Energy Cooperative Agreement.  
However, he stated that certain unnamed agencies within SAG  
needed to be sure that the Nuclear Material Safeguards  
Technologies Agreement did not conflict with government  
policies or interests. Maqubela could not promise when the  
agreements would be approved by SAG. Visiting USUNVIE COM  
Schulte raised the agreements during an August 25th meeting  
with DFA DDG Abdul Minty (septel).

13. (SBU) Maqubela reported that DME is reviewing a  
feasibility study from the U.S. Department of Energy to take  
back U.S.-origin spent nuclear fuel assemblies. He stated  
that the decision to return fuel will rest with Cabinet and  
that the decision will be guided by DME's Radioactive Waste  
Management Policy and Strategy, a copy of which was provided  
to Econoffs. The policy prohibits "in principle" both the  
import and export of radioactive waste, thus necessitating  
the Cabinet review. The policy requires consultation with the  
Ministries of Health, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and  
Water Affairs and Forestry. Of concern to DME is a finding in  
the feasibility study that among the spent fuel assemblies  
are a small number of un-spent fresh fuel assemblies.  
Maqubela stated that inclusion of un-spent fuel assemblies  
complicates the approval decision because the policy covers  
only radioactive waste material, not fresh fuel. Maqubela  
noted that his staff is reviewing the feasibility study and  
hopes to make recommendations to the Minister of Minerals and  
Energy soon.  
Bost